AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please substitute the abstract annexed as a separate page hereto for the "Summary" on page 14.

Please amend page 8, paragraph 1 as follows:

Fig. 2 shows a flow diagram of the process according to the invention. Initially, a heat flow is requested, S10, according to, for example, the difference between the catalyst temperature TKAT and the desired temperature or target temperature of the main catalyst 24. An initial split factor S12 is then defined, which is subject to limiting factors S14, S16, and S18. The first limiting factor S14 is defined by an engine operating field K10 based on the catalyst temperature TKAT and the catalyst temperature gradient TKATG. Accordingly, the introduction of energy is limited with increasing catalyst temperature TKAT, without having to take into consideration the difference between the catalyst temperature TKAT and the target temperature. The catalyst temperature TKAT, together with the change in the gradient of the catalyst temperature TKATGAE, is also used for a second engine operating field K12 of the second limiting factor S16, which takes into consideration an inhomogeneous temperature distribution in the main catalyst 24. The split factor is limited for large positive temperature gradients in the main catalyst 24, in particular if the temperatures TKAT in the main catalyst 24 are already high. If the positive temperature gradient TKATG also progressively increases, then the split factor is further reduced to safely eliminate the risk of a "runaway" situation in the main catalyst 24. The third limiting factor S18 uses a third engine operating field ~~K16~~ K14 to limit the split factor depending on the exhaust gas mass flow AMS and the exhaust gas mass flow gradient AMSG. This may be necessary because a reduced exhaust gas mass flow rate provides less cooling, and because under operating conditions, which require a high negative exhaust gas mass flow gradient, the HC and O_2 contents in the exhaust gas and the introduced chemical energy show at least temporarily a strong increase. The desired lambda value S20 in the exhaust gas path 16 with

the rich exhaust gas and the desired lambda value S22 in the exhaust gas path 16' with the lean exhaust gas are then preset, wherein the desired lambda value for the exhaust gas path 16 with the rich exhaust gas is pre-controlled in a step S24 and the desired lambda value for the exhaust gas path 16' with the lean exhaust gas is controlled in a step S26 by the lambda value measured after the main catalyst 24.